

July 9, 1969

AIRTEL

1 - Mr. McDonough

TO: SAC, Memphis (44-1987)  
FROM: Director, FBI (44-78861)

PERSONAL ATTENTION:

MURKIN

It is noted that on 3-10-69, James Earl Ray entered a plea of guilty to charges of murder in state court, Memphis, Tennessee, and received a sentence of 99 years. Attorneys for Ray then filed a motion for a new trial and on 5-26-69, the state court judge denied this motion.

Recent news accounts state that Chief Judge Mark A. Walker of the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals, Covington, Tennessee, granted a petition submitted to him on 6-25-69, by Ray's attorneys to have the court review the trial record of Ray's conviction and the Appeals Court will rule on 7-15-69, in Knoxville, whether it should consider an appeal by Ray for a new trial.

You are requested to immediately ascertain through your appropriate state sources the current status of state prosecutive action on this matter. This should include information as to what the nature of proceedings will be if appeal granted or if denied what further legal recourse Ray will have and any other details of pertinence. You should ascertain from the prosecuting attorney what his evaluation or observations are relative to current or subsequent legal actions on the part of Ray and/or his attorneys.

Handle and submit reply promptly.

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NOTE: This is for the purpose of determining the status of current and subsequent legal proceedings in this matter.

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